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ABOUT US

The Louisiana Environmental Public Health Tracking Program (LEPHT) is a Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) initiative that tracks important environmental health issues impacting Louisiana's communities. LEPHT provides information to environmental and public health professionals, legislators, advocacy groups, researchers and the public to facilitate better decision making, evaluation and policy development.

MISSION

Our mission is to develop a secure electronic network for the collection, analysis and dissemination of environmental public health data and information; guide policy, practice and other actions toward improving the health of Louisiana residents; and foster collaboration among the State's environmental and public health partners.

VISION

Our vision is to participate in a nationwide network of integrated health and environmental data that drives actions to improve the health of communities in Louisiana.



LEPHT Announcements

Website Development

The Louisiana Environmental Public Health Tracking (LEPHT) Program is developing a website that will include information on the following indicators:

Health Effects

Asthma Hospitalizations
Childhood Lead Poisoning
Birth Defects
Reproductive Health
Heart Attacks
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
Cancer

Environment

Outdoor Air
Public Drinking Water Systems
Private Well Water Usage

Once completed, the site will include background information and state data for all of the indicators.

LEPHT Community Workgroup

LEPHT will be establishing a community work group to assist in:

- identifying indicators of interest,
- identifying individuals to participate in community outreach workgroups, and
- crafting messages to educate residents about the national and state tracking programs.

Contact LEPHT at 1-888-293-7020 or epht@la.gov if you are interested in receiving additional information about the workgroup.

Success Stories and Stakeholder Activities

LEPHT is interested in showcasing its stakeholders accomplishments. If you would like to share information on a new grant, project or event with LEPHT partners, please contact Emán Williams at:



CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact: Emán Williams
E-mail: Eman.Williams@la.gov
Phone: 1-888-293-7020

Address: LDHH-LEPHT
1450 Poydras St., Suite 1640
New Orleans, LA 70112

Frequently Asked Questions

What data will be available?

The LEPHT Network will include data related to asthma and myocardial infarction hospitalizations, cancer, births, birth defects, vital statistics, childhood blood lead levels, ozone and particulate matter in ambient air, arsenic, disinfection by-products, nitrates and nitrites in public drinking water.

How will LEPHT data be displayed?

LEPHT will feature analysis, visualization and reporting tools that allow users to create maps, graphs and charts of selected data. Users will be able to view multiple displays of data side-by-side, drill down to various levels of data, and export data into usable formats such as Excel. Various levels of access will be provided to users depending on their role and purpose. Public users will have the ability to select from a predetermined set of indicator measures while authorized users will have the ability to perform ad-hoc queries. Data will be presented with information on the data source along with the limitations of the data.

Will personally identifiable data be protected?

Data provided to the public by LEPHT will be de-identified and aggregated and will conform to strict confidentiality and suppression rules as determined by the CDC and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.

LDHH Presented at the CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking Conference

The CDC held its fall tracking conference in Atlanta, GA from September 12-15, 2011. LDHH was selected to present two educational posters at this event. One of the posters entitled "Evaluating Asbestosis Hospitalizations in Louisiana, 2000-2009", described a data linkage project that demonstrated how occupational health data can be used for environmental public health tracking.

The second poster entitled "Tracking in Action: Laying the Groundwork for Emerging Water Quality Issues in Louisiana", discussed the findings from the LDHH 2003 Wood Preservation and Treatment Demonstration Project (which was also funded by the CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program), where the Department studied the feasibility of linking groundwater data and cancer data near wood preservation and treatment sites. As a result of the project, the Department realized that many of the residents who live near these sites were using private well water as their primary drinking water source. Since private wells are not

regulated in Louisiana, the Department developed a brochure entitled "Private Water Well Testing in Louisiana: What You Need to Know to Protect Your Water" to educate well owners about the importance of having their wells tested routinely. Since the Pilot Project, LDHH has collaborated with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) to provide the brochure to well owners when their wells are registered with DOTD. As a result of recent environmental disasters and chemical releases, the agency has collaborated with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to revise the brochure to include procedures residents should follow in the event their well head is flooded, recommendations for routine monitoring, and information about the major aquifer systems in Louisiana.

Partner Activities:

- The **US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** has just launched their updated Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) website: <http://www.epa-echo.gov/echo/>. This site provides fast integrated searches of EPA and state data for 800,000+ regulated facilities. It includes inspection, violation and enforcement data; Safe Drinking Water Act data, Toxics Release Inventory data, National Emissions Inventory data, and Water Quality Data.
- The **Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network (LBDMN)** is one of three programs in the Children's Special Health Services Section. LBDMN conducts active surveillance of children born with congenital medical conditions.

Each year the LBDMN provides reports to the Louisiana Legislature and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network.

Some of the 2010 accomplishments included:
 1. Expanded the program to achieve statewide surveillance;
 2. Developed an electronic information management system for future surveillance data collection and
 3. Formalized partnership with LEPHT.
- The **Louisiana Departments of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), Environmental Quality (LDEQ), and Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF)** continue to monitor Louisiana seafood to ensure it is safe to eat. Monitoring reports are updated weekly and are available at <http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/?shpid=5>.

CDC Announcements

CDC's New Strategies and Agendas

The CDC recently announced the release of the first ever “[National Prevention Strategy](#)” to help move the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness. The strategy can be accessed at: <http://www.healthcare.gov/center/councils/nphpphc/strategy/index.html>. CDC has also released, its “Addressing Public Health and Chemical Exposures: An Action Agenda.” This agenda can be downloaded at: <http://www.nationalconversation.us>.

CDC Launches New Website

CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has just launched a toxic substance site <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/>. This site serves as a “one-stop shop” for info on hazardous chemicals. Information can be queried by: 1) health effect, 2) chemical classification, or 3) target audience (public, emergency responders, professionals and providers). There is also info on organ systems, and specific toxic substances.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can the data be used?

Data provided on LEPHT Network can be accessible to researchers, public health and environmental practitioners, policy makers, and the public. Data can be used by local and state health departments, physicians and other public health officials to analyze trends over time, identify high-risk groups, target effective public health and environmental interventions, and advance public health research. The LEPHT Network will help agencies and others perform key functions, including monitoring and distributing information about environmental hazards and disease trends; advancing research on possible linkages between environmental hazards and disease; and developing, implementing, and evaluating regulatory and public health actions to control environmentally-related diseases. Information from the LEPHT Network can also be used by policymakers to guide public health legislation and help the public understand indicators of environmental public health in their communities.

LEPHT 2011: Future Activities

Activities planned for 2011 include:

- Implementing the EPHT Network;
- Reaching out to other LDHH Programs and stakeholders to identify Network needs;
- Finalizing data sharing agreements;
- Collecting and processing data into nationally consistent data and measures (NCDM) (i.e., standardized indicators which enable users to compare data); and
- Creating LEPHT training webinars for partners and stakeholders.

LEPHT Milestones

A few important milestones have been celebrated this year in the planning of the LEPHT Network:

- Developed LEPHT guide for data sharing policies and network planning (July 2011);
- Aggregated data for asthma, myocardial infarctions, carbon monoxide poisoning, and childhood lead poisoning and submitted to CDC (July 2011);
- Procured and processed air quality, cancer, hospitalization, emergency department and childhood blood lead data into nationally consistent data and measures (July 2011);
- Created the first set of data cubes for automated data processing and reporting (July 2011);
- Finalized data sharing agreements (DSA) with Vital Records, Childhood Lead Poisoning Program, and Office of Policy and Health Systems Analysis (January 2011) (DSAs outline criteria for using/sharing data.);
- Collaborated with LA Birth Defects Monitoring Program to digitize data (July 2011); and
- Purchased Emergency Department data for LDHH (June 2011).

Program Staff:

Dianne Dugas, Section Chief
Shannon Soileau, Program Manager
Adrienne Katner, Principal Investigator
Roshan Badakhsh, Epidemiologist
Kate Streva, GIS and Data Analyst
George Frierson, GIS and Data Analyst
Emán Williams, Communications Liaison
Michael Maerz, IT Program Manager
Mei-Hung Sun, Biostatistician



Free Webinars and Podcasts

LEPHT

LEPHT has developed a LearnLine webinar introducing folks to the LEPHT Program and Network. This webinar, “Environmental Public Health Tracking in LA 6/11”, is available at <http://ilinc.oph.dhh.la.gov>. To access this and other LDHH webinars, you can contact Rosemarie Robertson at Rosemarie.Robertson@LA.GOV to set up an account.

ASTHO

As part of a continuous effort to enhance the capacity of states to conduct tracking related activities, ASTHO in partnership with CDC has archived a series of webinars about environmental public health tracking. To access these webinars go to: <http://www.astho.org/Programs/Environmental-Health/Tracking-Environmental-Health-Hazards/>

CDC

Tracks FAQs begins this month with a special feature on: [How Can I Tell If Asthma Hospitalization Rates In My Area Are Changing Over Time?](#) You can link directly to the Tracks FAQs podcast from CDC (<http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/createrss.asp?c=401>), or by selecting the Tracks FAQs button found on the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program Website (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/>). Other podcasts available are: What is Modeled Air Data? and “What Are Suppressed Data and How It Can Be Used?” The CDC will release a different podcast each month, so check back often for any new updates! If you have a question for our Tracking experts, please e-mail trackingsupport@cdc.gov.

CDC and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) are pleased to offer [Environmental Public Health Tracking 101](#), a free course that provides an introduction to the major components of environmental public health tracking. The course is available online on an ongoing basis and may be taken by anyone. (http://www.nehacert.org/catalog/index.php?cPath=28&main_page=index)

Upcoming EPHT Workgroup Calls for Data Partners

- **Air Quality & Radon**
October 18 (air 2 p.m. & radon noon)
- **Birth Defect**
October 27 (1 p.m.)
- **Cancer**
October 24 (2 p.m.)
- **Climate Change**
October 27 (noon)
- **Hospitalizations**
October 13 (1 p.m.)
- **Lead**
October 10 (1 p.m.)
- **Pesticides**
October 12 (noon)
- **Pollen**
October 3 (p.m.)
- **Vital Records**
October 4 (12 p.m.)
- **Water Quality**
No Call Scheduled for October

To sign up for workgroup updates:
please contact: ephht@la.gov